

- 14 -

### CLAIMS

1. A process for treating sewage sludge or similar organic sludge in which dewatered sludge cake and an alkaline admixture are mixed and then dried under pasteurisation conditions utilising heat from the exothermic reaction with the alkali, in which drying is effected by extraction of moisture evaporated from the mixture by the exothermic heat;

characterised in that the pasteurisation conditions comprise maintaining a pasteurising temperature for less than 10 hours at a pH of at least 12, the pH of the mixture being maintained at 12 or above for less than a day.

2. A process according to claim 1, in which the pasteurising temperature is maintained for less than 8 hours, preferably less than 6 hours, more preferably for about 4 hours.

3. A process according to claim 2, in which drying is effected to dry the product to at least 50%, preferably at least 55%, dry solids content.

4. A process according to claim 3, in which the drying is effected to dry the product to between 50 and 65% dry solids content.

5. A process according to claim 4, in which the drying is effected to dry the product to between 55 and 60% dry solids content.

6. A process according to claim 1, in which drying is effected in a FIFO hopper.

19-MAR-2001 15:40 FROM McNeight & Lawrence

- 15 -

7. A process according to claim 1, in which drying is effected in a cycling operation until a predetermined moisture content is detected, then the dried material is discharged.
8. A process according to claim 1, in which drying product passes two or more times through a drying hopper.
9. A process according to claim 1, in which the steps of mixing, filling, drying and discharging the product are performed within 24 hours.
10. A process according to claim 9 in which the mixing and filling is performed in less than 8 hours.
11. A process according to claim 9, in which the drying is performed in less than 5 hours.
12. A process according to claim 9, in which the discharging is performed in less than 3 hours.